



# FEDERAL EFFORTS TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FACT SHEET



The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) called for the creation of the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts among various U.S. Federal government agencies. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is designated as the agency responsible for helping victims of human trafficking become eligible to receive benefits and services, critical to helping them regain their dignity and become self-sufficient.

## **U.S. Department Health and Human Services**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for certifying victims of human trafficking once they are identified. This certification allows victims to receive Federally funded benefits and services to the same extent as refugees.

Victims of human trafficking in the U.S. who are non-U.S. citizens are eligible to receive a special visa and benefits and services through the TVPA to the same extent as refugees. Victims who are U.S. citizens do not need to be certified by HHS to receive benefits. As U.S. citizens, they may already be eligible for many benefits.

Through HHS, victims can access benefits and services including food, health care and employment assistance. Certified victims of trafficking can obtain access to services that provide English language instruction and skills training for job placement. Since many victims are reluctant to come forward for fear of being deported, one of HHS' most important roles is to connect victims with non-profit organizations prepared to assist them and address their specific needs. These organizations can provide counseling, case management and benefit coordination.

Only adult victims need to receive certification letters from HHS in order to be eligible to access benefits and services. Children under the age of 18 do not have to be certified by HHS to receive benefits, rather they will receive eligibility letters from HHS.

HHS has awarded more than \$8 million in grants to organizations throughout the U.S. to provide services to victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Those services include temporary housing and legal assistance as well as cultural and educational programs.

Other Federal government agencies playing a critical role in assisting victims of human trafficking include:

- **U.S. Department of Justice: DOJ** investigates cases of trafficking and prosecutes the traffickers. DOJ has also contributed to the construction of a network of trafficking victims service providers via their grant programs, and facilitates the complaint process for persons wanting to report a case of trafficking.
- **U.S. Department of Labor: DOL** offers programs such as job-search, job-placement assistance and job-counseling services as well as educational and training services and referrals to supportive services such as transportation, childcare and housing, through its One-Stop Career Center System – which victims can access after HHS certification. The Wage and Hour Division also investigates complaints of labor law violation, and is an important partner in the detection of trafficking victims.

**Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline 1.888.3737.888**



- **U.S. Department of State:** **State** is responsible for coordinating international anti-trafficking programs and efforts.
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).** ICE investigates cases of trafficking, and is an important partner in victim identification. USCIS awards the T visa and continued presence status, which makes a victim eligible for HHS certification.

If you think you have come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the **Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at 1.888.3737.888**. This hotline will help you determine if you have encountered victims of human trafficking, will identify local resources available in your community to help victims, and will help you coordinate with local social service organizations to help protect and serve victims so they can begin the process of restoring their lives. For more information on human trafficking visit **[www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking)**.

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